

# Crystal Tips

*by* Kirsty Logan

when the last smear of ketchup is absorbed by the heel of the loaf,  
up he jumps

to do the dishes. he may only be eleven, but his parents raised  
him to know about

Chernobyl and Ethiopia and Rwanda, so they are not surprised by  
his willingness.

they know he knows about unfortunate children. they retire to the  
tv news.

he stacks the plates and rinses out the glasses, being sure to  
rattle them around

so his parents can hear. he's a little early and needs to kill time so  
he rinses forks.

when he's moves onto knives, she has appeared in next door's  
window: sliver

of nut-pale belly, fingers wet with suds, nails painted bright as  
glitterballs.

she sways as she scrubs, moving to music he can't hear through  
the double walls

between them. the gap between sill and blind is shoebox-sized,  
every wiggle

showing an inch more skin. if her midriff is nude then so must  
above and below,

he knows. rhinestones are glued along her cuticle, and he prays  
for reflections.

he crouches by the sink, hands immersed, to get a better angle. a  
breast's curve,

smooth as a pool ball, dips below the blind. he drains the sink,  
throws crockery

onto the draining board, and pounds up the stairs. 'he's such a good boy,' says his mother to his father. they kiss, soundtracked by headlines.

